

## **USGS FITNESS PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

### **Are all USGS locations required to provide a fitness program for employees?**

All USGS locations are required to perform the research necessary to make a determination if funds are available, and if so, what is the most efficient expenditure of those funds in support of employee fitness. Cost centers must make a decision on fund availability on an annual basis.

### **If I already belong to a fitness center, can I just submit the paperwork to my supervisor and get reimbursed for all or part of my membership fee?**

No, you must wait until a decision has been made on fund availability, and whether or not employee reimbursement will be part of the local program.

### **Do I have to participate in the employee survey on fitness?**

No, but you should if you expect to participate in the resulting local fitness program. The employee survey results will be used to determine estimated participation rates. The estimate participation rate will then determine the most cost effective approach to providing employees with fitness opportunities.

### **Is the survey confidential?**

Yes, it is not necessary to provide your name.

### **How often will employees be surveyed?**

That will depend on a number of factors. If the location where you work experiences a low turnover rate, there have been no changes to the local fitness offerings, and no program problems have been identified, employees may not be surveyed with any regularity. If there is a higher turnover rate and changes to local offerings, such as the building of new fitness centers, then the employee survey should be conducted as needed to support changes in the local program. Some locations may choose to survey employees on an annual basis in order to make annual decisions about funding levels.

### **Does the local fitness program have to provide every activity for which an interest is expressed?**

The USGS Fitness Program aims to provide maximum flexibility to allow employees every opportunity to participate in whatever type of activity they choose at the facility of their choice within budget and regulatory requirements. However, it is likely that some

of the expressed interests will fall outside the program guidance and capability. In addition, limited funds may limit what is offered at a particular location.

**Will all the local fitness programs be the same?**

Not necessarily. Each cost center must determine the funds available, the sources for fitness services available, and employee interest prior to determining the specifics of the local program. The USGS policy was designed to allow maximum flexibility at the local level.

**Can a lump sum payment be made to a commercial facility to decrease employee costs?**

Yes. The local procurement staff should negotiate the best deal for that location, and a payment covering up to a 12-month period is allowed.

**Is there a limit to the number of facilities at which group rates can be negotiated?**

No; however, the more employees who will use a particular facility, the greater the bargaining power and the greater the potential discount that can be made available.

**Is a lump sum payment required to negotiate a group discount?**

Not by the USGS policy or procurement regulations. This will depend on the specific commercial facility. Some facilities may extend a group discount if they are guaranteed a specific number of individual contracts. If this were the case, employees would have to commit to membership as part of the bargaining process.

**Is there a deadline for signing up for the program?**

This will depend on the needs and capabilities of each local cost center. All employees who wish to participate may be required to sign up by a specific time each year in order that the amount of reimbursement or discount can be determined, funds may be obligated, and any funds not used by that date can be redirected to other programs.

**Will the fitness work group be involved in the negotiations with the facilities?**

The assigned Contracting Officer will actually negotiate any contracts with the fitness facility, but the work group plays a key role in providing the Contracting Officer with all the available information it has collected, and informing the Contracting Officer of the desired results.

Except for individual membership agreements, no one other than an authorized member of the procurement office may make any commitment or agreement with any fitness facility.

**Who approves the local program?**

The senior management official at each USGS location is delegated approval under this USGS policy.

**If an employee is injured or develops a medical condition as a result of participation; do Workers' Compensation benefits apply?**

If the employee is injured or develops a medical condition as a result of participation at an off-site fitness facility, the employee is **not** covered by Workers' Compensation.

If the employee is injured or develops a medical condition as a result of participation at an on-site Federal facility, to include shower and locker room facilities, the employee's coverage under Workers' Compensation will be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with governing laws, rules, and regulations.

**Should local managers review employee participation in the program?**

Local managers should regularly review employee participation in terms of how many employees are participating in which aspects of the program offerings to make a determination that funding is being directed to obtain the greatest benefit to all employees and to terminate arrangements that do not have enough employee participation to warrant the continued expenditure of funds.

Managers and supervisors are not empowered to monitor individual progress of employees. Employees are responsible for ensuring that if they are taking advantage of the discounts and/or reimbursement for membership, they are doing so in an appropriate manner.

**Who will be responsible for handling employee complaints about the fitness program?**

Each USGS location should designate someone to be responsible for receiving and resolving employee complaints. If a complaint results from an individual membership that is reimbursed, the employee should speak to the appropriate individual at the fitness facility. If the complaint is with a facility with which the cost center has a contract, the employee should talk to the designated individual for the local program, who should also make sure that the Contracting Officer is informed of the complaint as well.